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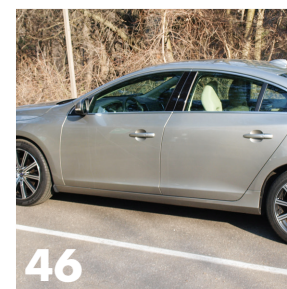
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ON THE COVER

Summer in the Cities is full of opportunities, including performances by special visitors like the Indigo Girls. Photo courtesy of Sue McLean & Associates

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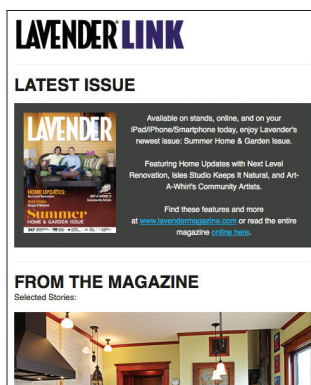
OUR LAVENDER

FROM THE EDITOR | BY ANDY LIEN

Extra! Extra!

In the publishing industry, we see all sorts of trends and headlines. We write them, too. We get to shape how information is shared while trying to be as nimble as possible. Print isn't dead, we aren't all paying to read content on the internet as was attempted, ad blocking software is getting pretty savvy, and Facebook requires us to pay for you to see our posts...kind of like putting money in a slot machine and pulling the arm to see how many of you might see something at a given time of any day. Okay, it's a bit more reliable than that, but the payout is similar to most pulls of the one-armed bandit.

Lavender's been steadfast in what we've offered and how we've offered it. We've had a usable and predictable website for years, our online magazine and its identical iPad/iPhone edition is free and easy to access, we don't have ad popups that make you want to leave our site, and we try to share as much information as seems reasonable to our budget as a free publication on the pay-to-play sites like Facebook. But, as with most forms of marketing, promoting ourselves through our own methods that we control is one of the most effective ways to get information to you. Our website is our biggest promotional tool. Go there and you can find everything we've got. Period. How can we tell you about what's on our website that's more of a curated selection? We've now got



an e-newsletter, Lavender Link, that I put together on a weekly basis that is driven by editorial content that is both in the issue and exclusive to just our website. It's got both the usual events as well as featured events for you to consider. What you may not know as much about but is a pretty popular part of our website: we've got contests. Our contests might be a new Cyndi Lauper album (this past issue) or tableware or tickets to a show or, recently, an All-Clad Slow Cooker. We're digging up free stuff for you all the time. And we'll now be holding a drawing every two weeks for a \$100 gift card to Target for those who've signed up for our e-newsletter, Lavender Link. Sign up, get the curated list of the latest stories from me, and get your name in for the gift cards...you'll only be ineligible once you've won. So, get in there and get winning (www.lavendermagazine.com/resources/subscribe-to-lavender-link-weekly-newsletter).

Thank you for being part of our steadfast readership as we navigate the publishing industry to best serve you. We're not in this for the click-bait, our mission to serve comes directly from one of our meetings the other day (and our very beginning in 1995) and I am very proud of it.

With you, with thanks, and with your next e-newsletter,
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Flying The Paranoid Skies

By the time this piece is published, yet another suspicious, (i.e., dark-haired, darkish-complexion) traveler may have been spotted and turned in to the authorities for questioning.

Most recently it was Guido Menzio, an Italian economics professor set to fly to Ontario, Canada, to give a speech at Queen's University. Waiting for takeoff, Menzio worked on a differential equation. This so alarmed his seatmate, that the person turned him in. The plane taxied back and Menzio was grilled for two hours, delaying the entire flight.

In April, Khairuldeen Makhzoomi, a 26-year-old Iraqi refugee and UC Berkeley student, was escorted off a Southwest Airline flight after he was overheard saying *inshallah* (roughly translated as "God willing" in Arabic) on his cell phone to his uncle. Now, many people of various backgrounds and religions speak Arabic (4.23 percent worldwide) and most Muslims are not terrorists. America is not an English-speaking-only, Christianity-only nation, and there are no legal sanctions against speaking and worshiping as one wishes.

I wouldn't recognize a differential equation if I fell over it, being more

of a "one, two, many" kind of guy, but more power to the folks who can handle them. Numerals as we know them are of Hindu-Arabic origin and ultimately gave us our cell phones and the Hubble telescope.

Languages are marvelous structures giving insights into other thoughts and cultures. I just finished a semester of Dutch and wonder, were I dark-complected, if that would sound terroristic to my seatmate on my upcoming flight to Amsterdam? I'm saddened by and afraid of this insularity and pride of ignorance being promoted in our country. Marc Fumaroli's 2011 book, *When the World Spoke French*, recounts that time in the 18th century when French was the connecting thread worldwide, back when our own multilingual Ben Franklin was the toast of Paris. Today, in America, citizens are routinely threatened, beaten — and worse — for speaking a language other than English.

Why, I ask you, is it never the hysterical seatmate that is escorted off the plane and questioned for hours before being allowed to continue his journey? The information they divulge could be useful in profiling bigots, who, in turn, could be booked together onto special flights, or kept out of the skies altogether. ■



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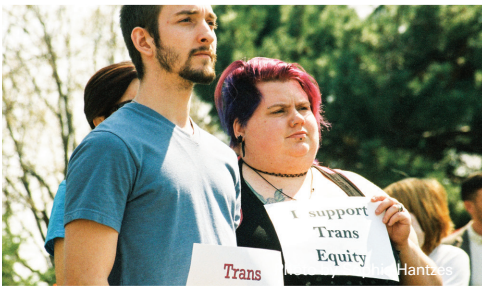
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Constellations. Photo by Dan Norman

CONSTELLATIONS

Through May 29
Jungle Theater, 2951 Lyndale Ave. S, Minneapolis
612-822-7063
www.jungletheater.com

Jungle Theater has mounted an intoxicating area premiere of Nick Payne's metaphysical drama, *Constellations*, directed with sensitivity by Gary Gisselman. Anna Sundberg and Ron Menzel portray a couple in love. Marianne is a quantum physics academic. Roland is a beekeeper. Various phases of this unlikely pair's relationship are played with a conceit where, once played, they are replayed with slight dialogue variations and with different interpretations.

Payne's is an effort to manifest the idea that reality exists on several planes at the same time. Some may feel it is more like an acting class exercise. That said, the chemistry between the two is luscious. Sundberg and Menzel continue to be two of the Twin Cities' most watchable actors. Kate Sutton-Johnson's starry set and C. Andrew Mayer's evocative soundscape enhance the metaphysical intentions nicely.

DIARY OF A WIMPY KID

Through June 12
Children's Theatre Company
2400 Third Ave. S, Minneapolis
612-874-0400
www.childrenstheatre.org

Adolescence is a time of confusion about changes within the biochemistry of the body, and learning about social hierarchies

and how schools nefariously replicate them. The new stage version of *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, inspired by Jeff Kinney's illustrated novel series, reflects this in a winning Disney Channel sort of way at the Children's Theatre.

Ricky Falco sparkles as

protagonist middle schooler Greg Heffley. He wants acceptance but his early adolescent masculinity is always being measured against socially sanctioned standards of what boys are generally expected to be. He cannot compare to stud muffin, Bryce, a boy admired by the girls for his looks and a certain physical attribute. He is defeated by a girl in a wrestling match. He also wrestles with whether or not to be humane toward a friend of his who measures up even less against the standards for acceptability.

Rachel Rockwell has directed the musical's 50-plus scenes with high octane energy and vibrant momentum. Andrew Bourgoin's music direction suits the tunes by Michael Mahler and Alan Schmuckler with a bright spirit. Kevin Del Aguila's script adaptation needs to focus more on a central moral to the story. The great core of what I think the show is trying to tell us is dissipated in all the pizzazz. But that pizzazz is lots of fun!

BURIED CHILD

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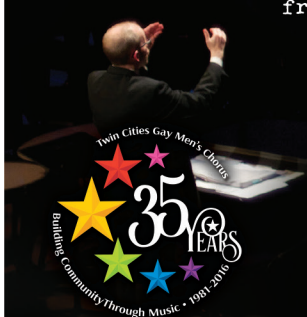
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Viva. Photo courtesy of Magnolia Pictures

1970s: Sam Shepard's *Buried Child*. We have seen enough revivals of Shepard's *True West* and *Fool for Love*. We are overdue for what is arguably his masterpiece, not to mention it won the Pulitzer Prize. This cryptic tale about a disturbing rural Illinois family, a returning son, and dark family secrets ranks as one of the major plays of its generation. No one quite comprehends the disintegration of the nuclear American family in the Midwest and western states like Shepard.

Red Bird Theatre Artistic Director Genevieve Bennett stages the classic as that company's inaugural production at the Southern. She is known for her superb productions of modern classics by Ibsen and Chekhov, renown for his own rural but upper class settings. It will be interesting to see how she approaches the gritty world of Shepard. Bennett shares, "The brilliance and power of *Buried Child* is that it is simultaneously personal and mythic. It takes contemporary drama and crashes it into Greek tragedy to result in a play that is compelling, dark, and funny with deep American roots."

THE FINAL FRONTIER FESTIVAL: HEROES AND VILLAINS

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In Set A, *The Further Adventures of....* by Kathleen War-nock muses on the potentially homoerotic feelings between

Prince Kal and Commander Zoron in the television program, *One Million Years, B.C.* Playwright Ellie Effinger-Weintraub turns fairy tale stereotypes on their heads with *Your Princess is in Another Lair*.

Gadfly Artistic Director Cassandra Snow is staging Michael Merriam's *At the Edge of Flight*, also for Set A. She calls it "a really sweet love story of queer people falling in love later in life, but it's also a fierce story of healing, and taking action in oppressive circumstances, and embracing the gray area between good and evil. Melissa Ballister, played by Valerie Borey, reminds us there's life after physical trauma and that we can reclaim our own stories, becoming the heroes in our own life once again."

Set B pushes the envelope with *Slut* by Nicole Jost, a play with heroes, villains, and mythic and magical characters. Katy Koop's play, *The Amazing Cunt and Lil' Bitch Take Minneapolis*, reclaims sexist insults hurled at women as they transform from victim to vigilante in hunting down and torturing criminals.

VIVA

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Hector Medina renders one of the most darling and endearing portrayals of a gentle gay man you'll ever see, as Jesus in *Viva*. Director Paddy Breathnach and writer Mark O'Halloran explore the impoverished neighborhoods of Havana and its lively drag culture. Jesus works as a hairdresser and a sex worker and has aspirations to be a drag performer despite the objections of his aggressive ex-con, alpha male father (a grittily macho Jorge Perugorria). In nurturing contrast, Jesus has a surrogate father/mother figure in Mama played by a resplendent Luis Alberto Garcia, an actor who embodies a character who has balanced both the inner male and inner female within in the face of Cuba's tumultuous history. This touching film is an added treat now that U.S.-Cuba relations are back in alignment. ■



noah wolf



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Cone Zone

Summer is here and nothing beats the heat like frozen dairy delights. This is the Midwest after all. Ice cream is more than a mere summer staple. It's necessary part of our culture. A breezy reminder that the oppressive heat is temporary. And while we're certainly not afraid to while away the winter months with a bowl of Ben & Jerry's in front of the fireplace, nothing quite beats the mouthfeel of a melting dip cone on a

late summer sunset stroll around the lake.

When it comes to favorites, everybody's got a list. I mean, who only has one favorite ice cream place? This isn't East Germany 1972. We've got options aplenty in the Twin Cities. Despite the odds, I managed to whittle my own list down to nine. Feel free to add or subtract as you see fit. By all means, send me your suggestions for I'm forever in search of new tasty treat sensations.



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DJ Shiek 12 - 5PM

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ABSOLUT DRINK SPECIALS

Nine Totally Delicious Ice Cream Spots in the Twin Cities*

(That's eight, plus one in Stillwater)

Grand Ole Creamery

Nostalgia makes ice cream tastes even better and Grand Ole Creamery holds the title of serving up my very first cone in Minnesota. Many a summer's eve did my college pals and I make our way down Grand Avenue for a double scoop. These days, I'm more likely to pop into the Cedar Avenue location for my whopper-at-the-bottom-of-a-waffle-cone fix. If you need to eat your feelings, go for the brownie sundae.

www.grandolecreamery.com

Pumphouse Creamery

These days, terms like all-natural, organic, and locally sourced seem ubiquitous (and, frankly, overused), but Pumphouse Creamery has been employing them (much to the delight of ice cream lovers in south Minneapolis) since 2003. With 20 regularly rotating flavors of both dairy and non-dairy ice creams and sorbets, even the finickiest tastebuds are sure to find something tempting. In a fresh-baked waffle cone. Oh, the waffle cone.

www.pumphouse-creamery.com

Milkjam Creamery

If you haven't heard about Milkjam Creamery, you've been living under a rock. A huge Communist rock. Their Jam Bun alone is already the stuff of legend. Picture decadent, fresh-churned ice cream stuffed lovingly into a pillowy glazed Glam Doll donut. You're picturing it, right? And you're in the car on the way to Milkjam, right? You're welcome.

www.milkjamcreamery.com

Pop Culture Frozen Yogurt

There's nothing quite so satisfying as concocting your own signature froyo masterpiece. Pop Culture in Arden Hills gives you 15 flavors, 70 toppings, countless sauces and fresh whipped cream to choose from. For the decisionally challenged like myself, arrive with time to spare. Pondering flavor and topping combos is serious business.

www.popculturefrozenyogurt.com

Cold Front

Lovers of Lynden's Soda Fountain on Hamline Avenue in St. Paul like myself were sad to see the untimely end of The Nook-neighboring ice cream spot. Lucky for us, a Cold Front has moved in (to the Lynden's space). Handcrafted old-fashioned sodas are still on the menu and Madison's Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream is on scoop. The signature Cold Front sundae comes complete with candied bacon (swoon). Coffee

lovers can also get their fix from an array of caffeinated creations.

www.coldfrontmsp.com

Dairy Queen

(on 38th Street and 13th Avenue South)

Of course I'm partial to Minnesota favorite and hometown ice cream hero Dairy Queen. I'm an even bigger fan of my own neighborhood DQ. A seasonal treat that reappears every spring offering your typical DQ array of frozen wonders. And so much more. I swear they offer every flavor of Blizzard DQ has ever had on the menu. Best of all, if you like your Blizzard chock full of "stuff," you're in luck. There's no skimping on 38th & 13th.

www.dairyqueen.com

Nelson's Ice Cream (Stillwater)

As if you needed another reason to spend a day in Stillwater. Still, here's one more. If you've never set foot in Nelson's, you're in for a treat. The shop is small, but the servings are huge. Like, laughably large. I say that as a person who can eat a pint of Ben & Jerry's without realizing it. If you're really feeling famished, you can even attempt to put away something called the Lumberjack. Five softball-sized scoops and as many toppings as you want combine to form a food challenge few have mastered.

www.nelsonsicecream.biz

Izzy's Ice Cream

Is there anything more ice cream iconic in the Twin Cities than the Izzy's scoop? Of course not. That tasty bitesized bonus scoop nestled atop your already delicious main scoop of ice cream means you can have your cake and eat it, too. Or at least try a flavor you weren't ready to commit a full scoop to. And with well over a hundred flavors, the combinations are nearly endless.

www.izzysicecream.com

Sebastian Joe's Ice Cream

Remember, nostalgia enhances flavor. Thus, there will always be a special place in my heart for Sebastian Joe's. My partner and I shared our very first cone together at the Franklin Avenue location a little over seven years ago now. In addition to being a great date spot, the ice cream itself is still among the best in town. Which is why, on any given summer night, there's a hefty line snaking its way throughout the shop.

www.sebastianjoesicecream.com ■



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2016 SUMMER WHAT TO DO

BY SHANE LUECK



Skyline Mini Golf. Photo courtesy of Walker Art Center

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www.comozooconservatory.org

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stories from Como's fascinating past, make a treat for polar bears, feed a giraffe, and meet one of the many zookeepers who make Como Zoo a world-class facility. Don't miss this opportunity to see the zoo wake up around you!

GLASS DISCOVERY
FOCI Minnesota Center for Glass
Arts, Minneapolis
Year-Round
Starting at \$75
www.mnglassart.org

During your hands-on Glass Discovery, you will work one-on-one, in a team, or in a small group (5 or less) with professional glass instructors to make your choice of a globe sculpture or pint drinking glass. The perfect activity for the curious, the adventurous, and the romantic. This signature hands-on experience is designed to provide participants with an exciting introduction to working with molten glass. Learn how to gather from the furnace, add color, and shape and mold a piece of glass to create your own masterpiece. The art that is made will take a couple of days to cool, so you will need to arrange for someone to return to the studio to pick it up. In order to secure your reservation, please schedule at least 7 days in advance.

**A GLOBAL TASTE
OF THE MARKET**
Midtown Global Market
Minneapolis
Year-Round
\$19

www.midtownglobalmarket.org
Take your taste buds on a trip around the globe – in only 90 minutes! The guided tour will begin with a brief history of the Midtown Exchange building, taking you back to the days you would find Sears catalogs on your doorstep. Entering Midtown Global Market, you'll see first-hand how the Neighborhood Development Center has incubated immigrant

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 ➔

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businesses, and have the opportunity to try global food samples while you hear the stories from the vendors themselves. Want more? Enjoy customizable cooking, dancing, or even music lessons to learn more about a specific culture represented within Midtown Global Market.

SKYLINE MINI GOLF
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
Through September 4
\$12

www.walkerart.org

Tee up (on the terrace) and let the games begin! Amazing views and novelties await you on the Walker's newest mini-golf course, featuring a giant hot dog, ping-pong paddles, a tricky chicken coop, and more. Due to the renovation of the Walker/Minneapolis Sculpture Garden campus, the 9-hole course has been moved up to the rooftop. Grab some friends and enjoy a round in one of the Twin Cities' most unique settings. Every ticket includes free gallery admission to the Walker for each golfer. For an added bonus, swing by Gather Café inside the Walker before or after a round of mini golf for a tasty snack or relax with a refreshing cold drink or frozen treat.

RHYTHM OF THE RIVER
Padelford Riverboats, St. Paul
Through October
\$13

www.riverrides.com

Experience the rhythm of the Mississippi River, spot bald eagles, herons, egrets and falcons as you travel back in time from Saint Paul's bustling downtown harbor through the Mississippi National Great River Park. We'll see you on the river. Narrated public excursions depart from Harriet Island in St. Paul. The historically narrated public sightseeing trips include: the St. Paul High Bridge, Pig's Eye's Cave, the Minnesota River mouth, Pike Island, and the timeless splendor of the mighty Mississippi River. All sightseeing cruises offer a full bar as well as snacks such as hot dogs and popcorn.

MIDTOWN FARMERS MARKET
East Lake Street, Minneapolis
Through October 27
www.midtownfarmersmarket.org
Spring is here and outdoor farmers markets are back! This

marks the Midtown Farmers Market's 13th season, attracting more than 55,000 visitors each year. This year, the market is also offering children's activities the second Saturday of every month, free weekly fitness classes with the YWCA, and free rides to the market on the Blue Line LRT the first Saturday of every month. The Midtown Farmers Market accepts SNAP-EBT and Market Bucks. Enjoy freshly prepared food while you fill your bag with produce, meats and cheeses from local farms, browse the wares of local artists, and enjoy the entertainment.

EDINA ART FAIR
50th & France, Edina
June 3-5
www.edinaartfair.com

The Edina Art Fair, the first art fair of the season and most acclaimed in the state, will mark its 50th anniversary during this year's event. Since its beginning, the Edina Art Fair has grown to feature over 300 artists from around the world and receives accolades and top rankings from national outlets such as *Art Fair Source Book* and *Sunshine Artist Magazine*. An estimated 200,000 people will attend the three-day event, taking part in a variety of ever-popular and new festivities taking place during the three-day celebration. At the Edina Art Fair, booths upon booths of ceramics, jewelry, glass, photography, wood carvings, mixed media, 2D pieces, fine art, wearables and sculptures will line the curbs of France Avenue and 50th Street and in the parking lot of Lunds.

GRAND OLD DAYS
Grand Avenue, St. Paul
June 4-5
Free
www.grandave.com

The 43rd annual Grand Old Days, Saint Paul's first rite of summer, will be double the fun this year taking place over the course of two days. The event is also expanding to cover about 30 blocks along Grand Avenue, from Dale Street to Prior Avenue. Of special note this year is the appearance of Derrick Barry, considered the world's number one Britney Spears impersonator. What started as a Halloween costume in 2003, turned into a passion. Fresh off a season of *RuPaul's Drag*



Edina Art Fair. Art by Cait Courneya

Race, Barry is bringing the act to Minnesota for Grand Old Days.

Of course, to earn the title of the world's number one Britney Spears impersonator is a huge honor. "It's everything I worked for," Barry says. "I'm just honored to have Britney know who I am

and have so much recognition. I never had to spend time and energy into doing other drag, so all of my time, money, and energy went into this, allowing me to perfect it."

Having tried Katy Perry in Vegas, Barry recognizes where his



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10,000 Lakes Concours d'Elegance . Photo courtesy of 10,000 Lakes Concours d'Elegance

strengths lie, noting that you can't force an impersonation. He says, "If you don't look like that celebrity, there is really no point in trying to perfect it. I've always wanted to do Mariah Carey, but I've never tried it. There are other people I would like to try just for fun."

As a celebrity impersonator, Barry never had much of a chance to try new looks or experiment with drag, but participating in *Drag Race* changed that. "It taught me that it's OK to change my features; I don't have to look like Britney on stage or on the runway or in a challenge," Barry says. "And that's always been my biggest challenge because I've been painting the same face for years, trying to look like her.

Even wearing bottom lashes was not something that I used to do. Little things like that: overdraw-ing your lip, contouring differently. All of that are things I've been experimenting with because of the show. It's so much fun to realize I can look like anything I want to. That's what drag is, there is so much power behind it. The show made me realize there's so much more to me than one face."

Getting ready quickly is something that Barry is used to, with costume changes for shows. But the biggest challenge for the *Drag Race* competitor was sewing. Normally, Barry is used to having weeks or months to create a look, but creating costumes under a time crunch is not something the

performer is used to, saying it created a desire to be better. Find Barry on the Flip Phone Stage at U.S. Bank with other local drag personalities — Sasha Cassadine as Missy Elliott, Vivienne Le Détruire as Michael Jackson, Phaedra Simone as Beyoncé, Sunny Kiriama as Ariana Grande, Julia Starr as Nicki Minaj, and Jamie Monroe as Dolly Parton — on the Sunday Funday of Grand Old Day!

**RIVERTOWN
ART FESTIVAL**
Lowell Park, Stillwater
June 4–5
Free

www.rivertownartfestival.com
Count on seeing beautiful paintings, photography, jewelry, pottery, metal work, fiber and just about any art form you can imagine. Be sure to stop into the market area to find local foods, clothing and other specialties that don't fall under the "art" category. Over 110 local vendors make this the event's 39th year and St. Croix Valley's largest art fair.

**10,000 LAKES
CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE**
Excelsior Commons, Excelsior
June 5
\$35
www.10000lakesconcours.com

Join other enthusiasts for a gathering of rare and valuable classic automobiles, watercraft, and motorcycles along the shore of Lake Minnetonka. The Concours will also feature retail vendors, fine food, live music and much more. Proceeds will benefit the ICA Food Shelf. ICA clients find themselves struggling to make ends meet. Most of ICA's clients work, but do not make enough money to cover the basic needs of their families. Some are able to achieve financial stability rather quickly, while others require ongoing assistance and support.

**NORTH STAR
BICYCLE FESTIVAL**
Various Cities
June 10–19
www.northstarbicyclefestival.com

Cyclists from around the world will be arriving in Minnesota for the 18th Annual North Star Bicycle Festival. More than 300 of the best pro and elite cyclists in North America are expected to participate in the seven-day festival which will be held in six host cities around central Minnesota. Check the website for a complete list of events for each location; in addition to races,

North Star Bicycle Festival. Photo courtesy of North Star Bicycle Festival



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SKYLINE VIEW - SECTION 327 • \$26 per person
Minnesota Twins Skyline View seats provide a spectacular view of the Minneapolis skyline, are angled towards home plate and are close to concessions and escalators.

spectators can also enjoy a variety of activities throughout the day. Live music, food trucks, and a beer garden will create a festive atmosphere for the thousands of fans. The North Star Bicycle Festival features a bike and fitness expo at each venue. You'll find all the latest and greatest gear and gadgets, information on clubs, programs and events, and much more. While you're browsing the expo, be sure to pick up a North Star Bicycle Festival T-shirt, all sales benefit Special Olympics Minnesota.

CELEBRATE PRIDE MONTH

Macy's, Downtown Minneapolis
June 10

Free

www.social.macys.com/event-shub

Join Macy's in a celebration of Pride! Enjoy a live performance by Ovation Choir or test your game of luck by playing Drag Queen Bingo to win Macy's prizes (to RSVP for bingo, call 1-800-329-8667). Other activities include informal modeling and a photo/love message wall. Enjoy some passed bites as you celebrate Pride in the department store!

36TH ANNUAL ART ON THE LAKE

Commons Park, Excelsior
June 11-12

www.excelsior-lakeminnetonka-chamber.com

This popular event showcases a

wide array of high-quality art and crafts, both contemporary and traditional. More than 140 artists will be featured as Excelsior Art on the Lake favorites return to this juried show with artists from across the country as well distinguished local artists. Contemporary and traditional works in jewelry, wood, painting, ceramics, glass, sculpture, fiber arts and mixed media will be featured. In addition to art, the two-day festival also showcases local musicians, local food vendors, and a craft beer and wine booth in a scenic and comfortable outdoor lakeside setting.

MSRA BACK TO THE '50S

Minnesota State Fairgrounds
St. Paul

June 17-19

\$8 advance tickets

www.msrabacktothe50s.com

This show, presented by the Minnesota Street Rod Association, has packed this enormous venue with 12,000 street rods, hot rods, customs, classic trucks, restos, street machines, and a few oddball rods that defy any category except cool. Weather never stops spectators who attend year after year, and this year there are over 300 vendors who provide a fabulous shopping experience for all the attendees. Daily events, entertainment, Kids World, Swap Meet, and more happening are happening every day.

NINE NIGHTS OF MUSIC

Minnesota History Center

St. Paul

June 28-August 30

Free

www.minnesotahistorycenter.org

The popular series, now in its 19th year, presents the rich and vibrant rhythms and sounds of Minnesota's multi-cultural community at free outdoor performances at the Minnesota History Center. Listen to infectious music and get out your dancing shoes for saucy salsa, soulful Motown, and classic big band swing! Bring a chair or blanket and a picnic, or purchase food from the History Center's Cafe Minnesota (no outside alcohol is permitted). In case of rain, performances will be held inside the History Center's 3M Auditorium.

SWEENEY TODD

Mill City Museum, Minneapolis

July 15-24

Starting at \$50

www.millcitysummeropera.org

Join Mill City Summer Opera for its fifth season with a production of *Sweeney Todd*. Audiences will enjoy watching a Stephen Sondheim classic in the Mill City Museum Ruin Courtyard this summer — sit and gaze under the stars as you are transported to 19th century London.

Artistic Director David Lefkovich says performing an opera in the Mill City ruins makes it incredibly immediate. "In



MSRA Back to the '50s. Photo by J. Markovich

most opera houses, you have the orchestra pit separating audience from performers," he says. "This is a very shallow space so the immediacy of the production is so clear. There is grand opera in there, but it's right in your lap. And, being outdoors is always a delight; any opportunity in Minneapolis to be outside and it's not raining or snowing is just terrific."

But the ruins also presents a planning challenge for Mill City Opera, and has forced Lefkovich to rethink all of the conventions and clichés he associates with opera and redo them. "We have no curtain, and there is the sun, so it's not a blackout," he says. "All of a sudden, some givens are changed."

Those changes also work their way into the story. As Lefkovich says, they always twist things around a bit at Mill City, especially pieces that people are familiar with. Meaning, if you've seen *Sweeney Todd* before, this is going to feel very different. "I think the biggest thing is, if anyone has seen the beautiful Latté

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34 ➔

36th Annual Art on The Lake. Photo by Marnie Swenson, MJFotography, Inc



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Japanese Lantern Lighting Festival. Photo by Jeff Henningsgaard Photography

Da production, we are going to use a lot of blood,” he says, before adding that there will likely be a splash zone in the first few rows. “The idea of the blood and the idea of the horror is going to play very strongly in this production. We are going to play with expectations versus what they will actually see. The production is also set on a giant meat grinder, which is just an ironic joy of working in the Mill City.”

For those doubting that *Sweeney Todd* be performed as an opera, Lefkovich shushes naysayers. “With opera, things happen a little slower,” he says. “With *Sweeney Todd*, there are moments where things slow down and we get to dig into the pathos of the performers. It’s exciting for people to see it’s not just theater people that can act, opera people can act. I’ve always been wanting to do this as an opera, the power of the music needs an operatic performer.”

But don’t think that just because it’s opera, you need to come dressed to the nines in the summer heat. In fact, Mill City Summer Opera proudly advertises a “come as you are” dress code. “I think I’m the most dressed up person there, but everyone else come as you are,” Lefkovich laughs. “If you’re going to sit outside for three hours, you wear what you want to wear. The formality has been taken away because we are not in an opera house. It’s a grand space, but it’s not a formal space. That’s actually really important that we relax the rigidity of some opera houses. You don’t have to pay a lot of money, you don’t have to get dressed up.”

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION ALL-STAR GAME

CHS Field, St. Paul

August 2

Starting at \$9

www.saintsbaserball.com

The last time the St. Paul Saints hosted the American Association All-Star game, the winningest pitcher in franchise history, Charlie Ruud, got the start for the North and pitched 2.0 perfect innings. That was seven years ago and in a different ballpark. Now, the All-Star Game is returning to St. Paul! Festivities will start with a home run derby the night before (Aug. 1), with youth baseball players from around the Twin Cities in the outfield to shag baseballs. There will also be a celebrity softball game before the home run derby, and music will close out the night. Then, The American Association All-Star Game is set for 7:05 p.m. on Aug. 2. Following the game, fans can take in a fireworks display.

PAWS ON GRAND

Grand Avenue, St. Paul

August 7

Free

www.grandave.com

Celebrate the dog days of summer on St. Paul’s Grand Avenue with Paws on Grand. Grand Avenue businesses partner with local rescue groups to pamper and celebrate four-legged friends all along the avenue. Gather up giveaways, relax on a pet-friendly restaurant patio, learn about pet adoption, support rescue groups, and pose for the popular pet photo contest!



8th Annual Summer Beer Dabbler. Photo by Daniel Murphy

8TH ANNUAL SUMMER BEER DABBLER

CHS Field, St. Paul

August 20

www.beerdabbler.com

Dabblers will join fellow beer lovers for an afternoon of sampling craft beer from over 65 breweries, eating delicious food from some of the Twin Cities best food trucks, and enjoying live music. At this year’s Summer Beer Dabbler, ticket holders have the opportunity to sample a variety of spirits from local, regional, and national distilleries at the Spirits Sampling Corner (located in the left field corner of CHS Field).

JAPANESE LANTERN LIGHTING FESTIVAL

Como Park Zoo & Conservatory, St. Paul

August 21

\$5

www.comozooconservatory.org

Because of the huge crowd last year, the event is expanding. The

footprint of the festival will be larger: more food vendors, more martial artists, more vendors. The Festival encompasses Japanese tradition through music, dance, crafts, martial arts, and, of course, lanterns. Entertainment will include several taiko drumming groups, koto (Japanese sitar), and traditional and contemporary dance and singing. Martial arts, Ikebana (Japanese flower arranging), and a host of other cultural exhibits and demonstrations will line several paths throughout the grounds. Delicious Japanese food and dozens of culturally related items will be for sale. The day will culminate at dusk with the main event — the lantern lighting. Stone lanterns as well as hundreds of folded paper lanterns throughout the Japanese Garden pond and Frog pond will create a vision of peacefulness and harmony to commemorate the dead. ■

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A TALE OF TWO PRIDES

BY SHANE LUECK

There's no doubt about it; Pride is growing. Year after year, Twin Cities Pride cites an ever-growing number of attendees. The first local GLBT march, held in June 1972, has evolved into the Pride Festival we know today, attracting hundreds of thousands. Beyond the Twin Cities, this year marks Duluth's 30th year of Pride. What these long-standing, popular celebrations demonstrate is the desire and demand for the community to gather, to be out and proud. Other communities are joining together to host their own festivities.

The small town of Pine City will again be the setting of one of the few rural Pride celebrations in the world, known as East Central Minnesota Pride. 2016 marks the 12th anniversary of this event which offers music, food and

a rendezvous of friends, family and community in a new location: downtown Pine City in the Robinson Park town square. Having moved from across the Snake River in Voyageur Park to the heart of Pine City, this year's

gathering promotes the theme "Pride in the Heart."

"We've managed to overcome all of the obstacles thrown our way by the people who are less open-minded than us, and yet we're still here," said Ariel Dunbar of Pine



Neighberz Band. Photo courtesy of East Central Minnesota Pride

City, a member of the East Central Minnesota Pride Board. "We're still growing stronger."

In 2005, the East Central Mens Circle, a discussion and support group for about 70 gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning men in East Central Minnesota, decided to gather together for a Pride event (then more of a picnic) in Pine City. Since, the Purple Circle (the women's counterpart to the Mens Circle), the regional PFLAG chapter, and other groups have banded together to strengthen and enhance the event.

Now, the event gives GLBT people of East Central Minnesota, those questioning, and their friends, family, and allies an opportunity to meet and build community in an otherwise isolated part of the state. Without the event, organizers believe there may not exist an "LGBT community" in this part of the state. The need has been evident in the event's growth, from record attendance numbers to a record number of vendors, sponsors, and supporters.

According to the organizers, there are several ways in which East Central Minnesota Pride has improved the quality of life in this part of the state. It serves the


CONTINUED ON PAGE 38 ➔



Brookview Park, Golden Valley.
Photo courtesy of the City of Golden Valley

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**12th Annual
 East Central
 Minnesota Pride**

Sunday, June 5, 2016
Robinson Park (Town Square)
200 5th Street SE • Downtown Pine City
Noon - 5:00pm



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Katy Vernon. Photo courtesy of East Central Minnesota Pride

vulnerable GLBT youth populations, especially those who are at risk of suicide, showing that there are other GLBT people nearby to offer support and encouragement. It also serves as a mechanism for civil rights engagement, promoting tolerance through a community dialogue about GLBT issues. The entire event is innovative in that it isn't being done on this scale elsewhere in a small town.

Headlining East Central Minnesota Pride is Minneapolis-based, British singer-songwriter Katy Vernon. Also performing are North Branch-based The Neighborz Band, no stranger to East Central Minnesota, and Duluth-based "Take It With You" live radio theatre. Twin Cities Public Television's Val Mondor returns as this year's emcee and Geo Montecillo will deejay.

This celebration serves the five-county region of Pine, Isanti, Chisago, Kanabec and Mille Lacs Counties, and attracts attendees from the hubs of the region, such as North Branch (pop. 10,087), and even its tiny villages, like Denham (pop. 34).

Since the celebration began 12 years ago, this rural part of Minnesota has seen change. Most recent census data show that, in 2010, Pine City and its surrounding townships have become some of the gay strongholds of Minnesota, with the most same-sex coupled households of anywhere else outside of Minneapolis-St. Paul.

East Central Minnesota Pride kicks off the first such celebration in Minnesota in June each year, during what President Obama has declared as Pride Month. "Our goal has always been to provide caring support and friendship for LGBT people living in the rural area of Minnesota," said Don Quaintance of Center-

ville, a founding Pride board member. "This event brings people from all walks of life together in friendship, community and progress in understanding."

Closer to the Metro, Golden Valley is set to become the first Twin Cities suburb to hold its own gay Pride festival, and perhaps rightly so. According to census figures, there are more gay couples in Golden Valley, as a percentage of households, than any other city in Minnesota.

It all began last fall, when Peter Knaeble, a Golden Valley resident, put out a post on Facebook asking if anyone was interested in working with him on a new event in the suburb. After receiving a positive response, a small but dedicated committee of nine was formed to plan the first suburban Pride festival in Minnesota. This group has been meeting regularly for the past six months planning this new event.

"The festival will highlight our LGBTQ families, friends, and allies in the spirit of promoting greater understanding of Golden Valley's rich and growing diversity," Knaeble says.

Since this is a brand new event, it took a lot of brainstorming to get the festival envisioned and planned. "We wanted something uniquely 'Golden Valley,'" Knaeble says. "We started by setting a theme ('Celebrating Community, Family, and Friends') and worked from there to create a family-friendly Pride event that we hope will become an annual celebration of the diversity in our city."

Knaeble admits the committee's first call was to the friendly staff at the Twin Cities Pride office. "They were very encouraging in our efforts and helped us to coordinate a date that would not interfere with their event. They understood that we were trying to create a festival that was more modest in scope, but still complementary to theirs."

The greatest lesson the committee learned is that six months is actually a very short time to plan a brand new Pride event. All the event logistics (park rental, bathrooms, music planning, promotion, fund raising, city coordination, booth marketing, food vendors, kids' activities and budgeting) seemed overwhelming, but the dedicated group of nine volunteers is on the verge of pulling it off.



Brookview Golf Course, Golden Valley. Photo courtesy of the City of Golden Valley

Perhaps the greatest surprise of the event, is that Golden Valley Pride is not a city-sponsored event. The Pride festival is totally private, self-funded, and volunteer-run. But, Knaeble says, the city staff and council are strong supporters of the event.

Golden Valley Pride attendees can look forward to a variety of family-friendly activities, including food trucks, community booths, kids games, and musical performances. The music will include Outloud (a part of the Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus), Freedom Jazz! Big Band (a GLBT group), and The Sons (a Twin Cities cover band). Tom Knabel (Twin Cities Human Rights Campaign) and Phil Duran (OutFront Minnesota) are also on the schedule to give a keynote presentation, while kids can enjoy a free bounce house, city puppet wagon, and access to the large park playground.

As for the locale, Golden Valley also brings a new perspective.

"Our planning committee thinks it is important to celebrate the diversity of our suburban residents as opposed to the TC Pride Festival which is more urban-focused," Knaeble says. "The TC Pride is a great event, but we think it is important to celebrate out in the suburbs where the majority of the GLBTQ folks and families live."

Ultimately, Knaeble says the growth of Pride celebrations is a great thing. He says, "Some people asked us if another Pride festival is passé, but given the current events in the local and national news, we think our new Pride event is more relevant than ever." ■

EAST CENTRAL MINNESOTA PRIDE

June 5

www.eastcentralminnesotapride.com

GOLDEN VALLEY PRIDE

June 12

www.goldenvalleypride.com

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2016 SUMMER QUEER MUSIC PREVIEW

BY SHANE LUECK

The Twin Cities is host to a rich arts scene, and GLBT music is part of that, meaning Twin Cities queer music fans have a lot to look forward to this summer. Whether you're looking to take in the sounds of one of the area's GLBT music groups or you're in the mood for a concert put on by some of the community's superstars (including vocal allies!), this might just be the summer line-up you've been waiting for.

QMC PRIDE KICK-OFF CONCERT

Queer Music Consortium
June 5

Como Park Pavilion

Join all the members of the Queer Music Consortium (QMC) for the annual concert! Featuring One Voice Mixed Chorus, Calliope Women's Chorus, Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus, Minnesota Freedom Band, and the Minnesota Philharmonic Orchestra, it'll be a wonderful outdoor event, perfect for the whole family. Plus, it's on a Sunday for the first time in 30 years! Of special note, *this event is free and open to the public!*

BLONDIE

June 11

Weesner Family Amphitheater
www.suemclean.com/Zoo

Debbie Harry is a musician, actress, and style icon. Known for her signature peroxide-blond hair and striking features, the legendary lead singer of Blondie has also appeared in films, television and even once as a Playboy bunny. She became something of an institution in the New York City scene at places like Studio 54 and CBGB. It's there that she became



Blondie. Photo by Danielle St. Laurent

closely tied to the gay community. Recently, Harry and the rest of Blondie turned down performing at the Sochi Olympics, but that's not the first time she's stood up

for the community, as a long-time ally in the fight against AIDS, as well as appearing on Cyndi Lauper's True Colors tour for the Human Rights Campaign. Celebrate

Blondie and their commitment to the community by taking in their sounds during an appearance during the Minnesota Zoo's Music at the Zoo lineup.



One Voice Mixed Chorus. Photo by Brent Dundore

SHOWTUNE SHOWDOWN

One Voice Mixed Chorus
June 13

The Woman's Club of Minneapolis
www.onevoicemn.org

One Voice Mixed Chorus has thrown down the gauntlet! They'll be hosting The Rose Ensemble, The Twin Cities Women's Choir, and VocalPoint as they sing their hearts out in an epic battle for choral supremacy. Back for its second year, *Showtune Showdown* is a unique blend of *American Idol*, *Name That Tune*, and *Glee*, with loads of Broadway glitz thrown into the mix. Join host, Erin Schwab, and celebrity judges as they put Minnesota's finest choirs through their paces to earn the coveted \$1,000 grand prize! One Voice Mixed Chorus is the host of this event and the proceeds will help fund their community engagement work, including anti-bullying education in schools, and performances in greater Minnesota.

TWO BOYS KISSING

Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus
June 17-19

Ted Mann Concert Hall
www.tcgmc.org

Act I of this performance is sure to please, but Act II begins with the world premiere of *Two Boys Kissing*, based on the 2014 Lambda Literary Award-winning young adult novel by New York Times best-selling author David Levithan and composed by

Joshua Shank. Based on a true story, *Two Boys Kissing* follows the story of Harry and Craig, two teenage boys who, in response to a local hate crime, decide to attempt to break the Guinness World Record for the longest kiss. The action is narrated by a Greek chorus of gay men, the previous generation who lost their lives to AIDS who comment with joy and sadness on the action in the story and about how the world has evolved.

MUSIC IN THE PARKS

Minnesota Philharmonic Orchestra
June 19

Lake Harriet Bandshell
www.mnphil.org

Come and enjoy wonderful music in the wonderful summer scenery of Lake Harriet as the Minnesota Philharmonic Orchestra plays at the Lake Harriet Bandshell for its 3rd annual Music in the Parks performance.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42 →

Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus. Photo by Paul Nixdorf





Indigo Girls. Photo provided by Sue McLean & Associates

BOWTIES UNDER THE BANDSHELL

Minnesota Freedom Band

June 20

Lake Harriet Bandshell

www.mnfreedomband.org

The Freedom Band's annual Pride concert under the Lake Harriet Bandshell is the last concert of the 2015–16 season. Don't miss the band playing some of their favorite songs from this season, *Star Wars*, *The Little Mermaid*, "Imagine," "Take On Me," "Rumour Has It/Someone Like You," "I Will Always Love You," *Dreamgirls*, *Grease*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and more!

PRIDE CONCERT

One Voice Mixed Chorus

June 26

St. Mark's Cathedral

www.onevoicemn.org

After the parade, come join One Voice at St. Mark's Cathedral right on the edge of Loring Park for their annual Pride Concert. Celebrate the amazing strides the LGBTQ community has made over the past year with the chorus as they lift their voices in solidarity and strength!

ADELE

July 5–6

Xcel Energy Center

www.xcelenergycenter.com

The iconic singer who has proudly supported the GLBT community is returning to North America for her first tour in five years. As the kick-off of the North American leg of her tour, Adele is playing the Xcel Energy Center for two nights. In the U.S., Adele's "25" is the only album to sell over three million copies in one week and the only album to sell over a million albums in two separate weeks — her status as a musician is undeniable. But her status as a vocal ally for the community makes this a can't-miss performance. Whether celebrating Pride in her hometown or being *laissez faire* about her son's sexuality, Adele has stood by the community from the beginning.

INDIGO GIRLS

July 25

Weesner Family Amphitheater

www.suemclean.com/Zoo

Over time, the Indigo Girls audience has largely reverted to its core of queer fans. They circled the wagons after Amy Ray and Emily Saliers were persistently branded a "lesbian folk duo" in the music press after they came out in 1994. It is rare to find musicians together so long, rarer still with such profound successes. Their music lives in the hearts of generations of dedicated fans and continues to inspire young musicians.

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DIXIE CHICKS

August 27–28

Minnesota State Fair Grandstand
www.mnstatefair.org

Don't let their southern charm fool you, the Dixie Chicks have made headlines for years because of their stances on things like gay marriage. Originally from Dallas, the group has been a force in the music industry since their 1998 album *Wide Open Spaces*. That album sold more CDs that year than all other country music groups combined. Comprised of lead singer Natalie Maines and sisters Emily Robison and Martie Maguire, the band boasts 13 Grammy Awards, as well as multiple Country Music Association and Academy of Country Music awards. In the last decade, the group has remained firm in

their liberal-leaning identity; they continue to spread messages of freedom and evoking change with their music. In 2006, the Dixie Chicks released the single "Not Ready to Make Nice" ahead of their album *Taking the Long Way*. Other popular hits include "Travelin' Soldier" and their cover of Fleetwood Mac's "Landslide."

A GREAT BIG WORLD

August 29–30

Leinie Lodge Bandshell
www.mnstatefair.org

When A Great Big World jumped on to the scene, no one could predict just how much the GLBT community would embrace the band, and vice versa. As it turns out, the band is not afraid of singing about gay love, and that's

unusual for a mainstream pop act these days. Aside from the cheeky "Everyone Is Gay," their 2015 "Hold Each Other" features sets of lyrics sung by Ian Axel, who is straight, and Chad King, who is gay. The lyrics address love from both their perspectives and use the proper pronouns to do so. Hearing a man sing "Something happens when I hold him/He keeps my heart from getting broken" is something you don't hear too often on Top 40 pop radio these days.

DEMI LOVATO & NICK JONAS

August 31

Minnesota State Fair Grandstand
www.mnstatefair.org
Canceling their North Carolina

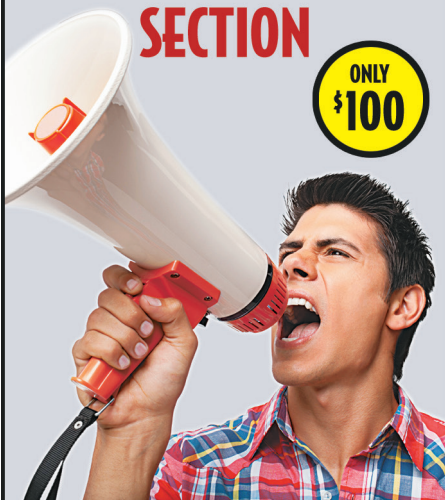
tour stops in the wake of HB2 is just the latest in the long history Demi Lovato and Nick Jonas have with the GLBT community. Having embraced their gay fans from the beginning of their careers, both singers have been vocal allies for the community. Whether holding launch parties at gay bars or speaking out on issues relevant to the community, Lovato and Jonas have never shied away from their GLBT fan-base like some other stars. The Future Now Tour marks the sixth headlining tour for Lovato and the third for Jonas, as the two join forces, appearing at the Minnesota State Fair Grandstand. ■

Dixie Chicks. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota State Fair



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2016 Volvo S60 Inscription



When we last reviewed the Volvo S60, it had just undergone a mid-cycle refresh, gotten a new series of engines installed underneath its hood, and had us smiling. We also said that this car was “sporty and fun to drive.”

Yes, *those* words.

Since then, Volvo added more to one of its most popular models in its lineup. For 2016, the S60 gains two more variants. One is the lifted Cross Country model, adding some ground clearance to the sporty sedan. We have seen this kind of vehicle before; I believe Subaru and American Motors once sold a lifted all-wheel drive sedan each some time ago.

The other new variant addressed a complaint we had with the S60: lack of rear seat legroom. This model was actually not originally conceived in Sweden, which leads to a very interesting twist to this story.

As you may know, Volvo Cars is owned by a Chinese company, Geely. In China, there is a trend where some cars were stretched for the owners to be driven in. These owners happen to be anyone with some sort of power: corporate people, government officials, and members of the ruling party inside the People's Republic. They have enough money to buy a stretched sedan and employ a driver to toll them around to wherever they need to be.

Geely figured since they had Volvo as a worthy asset, they could dive into their home market with a stretched version of the globally popular S60 sedan. In China, they simply called it the S60L. Here, we call it the S60 Inscription. And, yes, it is now a part of the Volvo lineup stateside.

There is yet another twist to the S60 Inscription's story. Because the idea was originally conceived in China, it seemed natural that they would build this stretched S60 over there. Volvo's Chengdu plant (also operated by parent company Geely) was also tasked to build every S60L for any market that wants to sell it. That includes selling it here. Therefore, this car has the distinction of being the first Chinese-built car to be sold in the United States of America.

When a Volvo S60 Inscription arrived recently for its round of evaluations, many questions were considered. What we would like to explore is not only the quality question of whether this Chinese-built Volvo is as good as any built in Europe, but also whether stretching the wheelbase and rear seat space improves or hinders our original conclusions of the S60.

If you come face-to-face with the S60 Inscription, you might find that it is just the same as the regular S60 sedan. The distinction between the two S60s is easily discovered right at the B-pillar. The rear doors are quite long to match the 3.1-inch stretch of the wheelbase over the normal S60 model. Not to mention, all four doors open wide for easier access in and out of the car. The short deck of the S60 remains intact, a telltale of what this car truly is.

For the S60 Inscription T5 tester we had, only 17-inch wheels were

shod on this model. They look fine for the purpose of being more of a comfort sedan than a sporty one. In all, the S60 Inscription is quite handsome to look at.

The big story about the S60 Inscription is the 2.9 inches of legroom over the regular sedan. It does make a difference, especially when one cross-shops the S60 against the likes of the BMW 3-Series, Mercedes-Benz C-Class, Cadillac ATS, and Lexus IS. Instantly, the S60 Inscription becomes the winner above all premium so-called compact sedans in terms of rear seat room and space utilization. For people up to six-foot-one-inches tall, you have it made in the back seat. Even with the extended rear leg room, there is no difference between the regular S60 and the Inscription in terms of trunk space. Volvo claims it has 12.0 cubic feet. Honestly, it appears much bigger than that.

Front seat room is the same as in the regular S60. Seating offers plenty of bolstering and support while wrapped in a great swath of leather. Usually, Volvo hides are pretty soft, although this one is made for durability. The driver faces the same instrument panel as in the standard S60, with its switchable screens for the speedometer, tachometer, trip, and fuel economy readings with a choice of three themes to select from. You can also add other functions on the fly, thanks to the switches on the turn signal stalk. Various switches are found on the steering wheel, the two other stalks off of the steering column and below the beltline. If you have never driven a modern Volvo, take some time to familiarize yourself with them. They are not as easy as they appear to be.

The center stack is another feature from the normal S60 models that requires some understanding. The keypad and switches surrounding it are actually more logical than they appear. The climate control switches are among the easiest to decipher, as Volvo first created the “human” zone switches for airflow. On top is the screen for the Sensus infotainment system. Here is where you can be entertained, informed, and navigated to your destination. As a bonus, Harmon/Kardon offers one of the finest speaker arrangements in a sedan.

For the S60 Inscription, two driveline combinations are available. All-wheel drive customers get the 2.5-liter five-cylinder turbocharged engine with 250 horsepower. Our tester came only with front-wheel drive, which meant having the 240 horsepower turbocharged 2.0-liter Drive-E four-cylinder engine under its hood. Combined with an eight-speed Geartronic transmission, the S60 Inscription is very motivated with smooth delivery and a nice clip. It is also quite efficient. On average, the turbocharged Drive-E engine delivered 27.5 MPG in a mix of city and highway driving.

On the road, there is a distinct difference between the shorter S60 and

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the Inscription. A longer wheelbase means a smoother ride, right? In relative terms, yes. It does the job when dealing with indifferent road surfaces, yet I found no distinct difference between the two wheelbases in terms of ride quality. They both ride pretty well. Handling is on the softer side, however. It corners well, but not without some minute roll and lean.

Though the steering system feels a bit numb, the S60 Inscription has quite a turning radius despite its longer wheelbase. Reaction from the wheel is good, especially in evasive maneuvers. Braking is superb, starting with great pedal feel and exceptional stops in normal and panic situations. One thing that was pointed out was the size of the disc rotors seemed to be on the smallish side for a car designed for optimal safety. Sometimes, when the shoe fits, it wears very well.

A Volvo is not worthy of its badge if it is not equipped with the latest safety technology. The S60 Inscription offers Intellisafe, a suite of features that includes active cruise control, lane keeping aid, pedestrian and cyclist detection with full auto brake, collision warning, distance alert,

driver alert control, and road sign information. Our tester came with the addition of Blind Spot Information System (BLIS) and Park Assist Pilot.

The 2016 S60 lineup starts with a base price of \$34,150. A jump to the longer wheelbase Inscription will set you back another \$4,750. This Platinum trim T5 front-drive tester came with a complete sticker price of \$45,825. For an all-wheel drive Inscription, expect to pay at least \$40,400.

To answer those questions from earlier in this review, let us take them one at a time. In terms of quality, most of the vehicle itself indeed matched areas of build and materials between European and Chinese-built S60s, but we did find some minute differences. If we stated what they were, they would be brushed off as mere nitpicking. The Chinese-built S60 Inscription is a well-built vehicle that is worth looking at, if one is in the premium compact sedan market.

As far as whether to choose the S60 Inscription or its shorter brother, the answer lies between the B and C pillars of the roof. If you demand excellent rear seat room, the S60 Inscription fits the bill. End of discussion.



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SHOW SUBJECT TO CHANGE

310

I have been sober for 310 days.

For someone with my alcohol-craving genes, being able to truthfully write those words is the equivalent of climbing Mt. Everest in a sports bra and running shorts. Without oxygen. I come from a long line of drunks, including a grandmother who died of liver failure in her mid-40s, and my father, who put a gun in his mouth at age 54 when his booze-triggered pancreatitis meant that he could no longer drink.

310 frickin days.

In the recovery community, my sober time is just a miniscule screen blip compared to those who have gone two or three or more decades sober. For the record, I'm in awe of those humans.

Still, I absolutely never thought that I'd get here. It's taken ten years of trying (with many dry stints that never lasted beyond four months) for me to get to this point. I'm not quite sure why this attempt has taken hold (and as I write those words, I'm remembering that lest I forget, it really is one day at a time), but I'm not going to wonder for too long. Instead, I'll simply keep going.

Or so that's what I tell myself.

In case you're wondering, I took my last drink on Pride Sunday, June 28, 2015, at about 11:30 a.m. at a bar on Hennepin Avenue, while watching the parade. Mind you, I can only approximate the time of that last drink; at some point that morning, I blacked out, and I'm sure the parade became quite irrelevant. Thankfully, a niece got me into a cab and then home, where I sprawled on my couch with bed-spins for the next 20 hours. I only got up to puke.

The ordeal, which I orchestrated entirely myself, was enough to cause me to swear off drinking forever.

So what have I learned in 10-plus months of sobriety?

For one, it really does get easier. My cravings for chardonnay (during the workweek, they began at about three in the afternoon; on weekends, I always wanted to drink at brunch time) have all but evaporated. I'm told that's due to my brain being rewired, something which takes at least four months (there's that time limit again) to even get started.

Amazingly, I can now drive past liquor stores and not even notice they exist.

Sobriety has also given me surprising degrees of clarity and consistency. I'm far less forgetful, way more even-keeled, and life's ups and downs have become significantly easier to manage. That's a good thing

since, as of late, I've had quite a few more downs than ups. Yet, given that I now know I really do have the power to abstain, I don't run to booze as a way of coping.

Instead, I default to Ben & Jerry's. Specifically, Stephen Colbert's AmeriCone Dream. Mmm.

I've also found that Sober Ellie isn't Supergirl; there's only so long that I can sit at a bar with friends who are doing Tequila shots (and me drinking cranberry juice) before I have to run out of the place. One more minute, another moment of booze-induced merriment, and I'd be right back to having a grand old time.

Grand, up until where I'd black out and then do things I'd never remember but certainly would regret.

By the way, I sometimes still think that a nice full glass of Chateau St. Michelle would make everything perfect (or better). When those moments shoot into my brain, I remind myself that they'll soon pass. And they always do.

Another thing I've discovered about sobriety: we all ripple to each other. I've made it a point to surround myself with sober people, some younger, some older. Each inspires me to stay the course; they also make me accountable for my own thoughts and actions.

But there's more to it now. It turns out that I actually inspire others. In particular, a dear brother-like friend (and long-time drinking partner) is presently struggling to stay sober. That I've been sober shows him that it's possible. Even more, I know that he'd lose faith in sobriety if, suddenly, I went back to booze.

As I said, it's all about rippling. Maybe the words on this page are rippling to you, dear gentle reader?

Finally, I used to drink as a way of coping with my aloneness, which at times can be quite unbearable. With a couple of drinks in me, I wouldn't feel so bad. The next day, of course, would be a totally different story.

Incredibly, being sober has even made it easier to be alone. I know that sounds counterintuitive, but it's true.

Maybe I've finally figured out that there's more to life than craving for another human to love. Or another drink to have. ■

Ellen (Ellie) Krug is the author of Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change (2013) and a speaker/trainer on diversity and inclusion (www.elliekrug.com). She welcomes your comments at ellenkrug-writer@gmail.com.



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The Leading Authority On Gay Penguins

Recently, I had the experience of being the only gay at a dinner party. Since North Carolina passed a trans-discrimination law, I've notice that when I'm the only gay in the room, straight people feel compelled to make it very clear that they support my use of whatever public bathroom I choose.

My response to this is to explain that there's a difference between transgender and gay. Regardless of this distinction, though, we should all be allowed to use whatever damned bathroom we please. As a woman, I have never identified with the shadowy figure in the triangle dress on most public bathroom doors. Who elected this weirdo to represent all of womanhood? Gay, straight, trans: who among us would chose to be represented by someone with the bad taste to wear an empire-waist dress with those toothpick legs?

I have nothing but the deepest empathy for my trans brothers and sisters and their fight for equality. While I am physically a coward and, thus, incapable of kicking anyone's ass, I am quite clever and would be absolutely delighted to destroy anyone set on denying trans-rights with a withering verbal attack.

However, I feel completely out of my depth when asked by well-meaning straight people to speak on behalf of the trans community because, you know, I'm not trans! I feel almost as awkward when expected to speak on behalf of the entire gay community. It always makes me feel as if I've been forced to order sandwiches at Subway for every gay person in the world. The Subway sandwich lady asks me what I want on each sandwich, and I stare at the vast sea of meats, cheeses, and vegetables. I panic and order 700 million roast beefs on wheat with pickles and olives, knowing that I'm going to disappoint 699.9 million people.

So, what I usually do when put in this position is to turn the conversation

to a population I feel very comfortable representing: famous gay penguins.

I claim to be the leading authority on famous gay penguins. If anyone is foolish enough to challenge me for this title, I'd be happy to engage in a famous gay penguin trivia duel.

Just as Ellen and Portia aren't our only famous couple, there are a number of celebrated same-sex penguin couples, all of whom have a unique story to tell. Here are a few:

Jumbs and Kermit, two British male Humboldt penguins, who took responsibility for sitting on an egg after its deadbeat father deserted the mother.

Stan and Olli, gay King penguins and proud lovers, who were relocated to a new home so they could be together forever. At the new zoo, they join Juan and Carlos, another gay penguin duo, making Hamburg's Hagenbeck Zoo the South Beach of the bird world.

Perhaps the most poignant penguin tale is that of New York's Roy and Silo, who captured the hearts of the world (except for the monsters who oppose same-sex penguin love) when they set up a nest and tried to hatch a rock as if it were an egg. When that didn't work, they hooked up with a lesbian penguin, which resulted in the birth of Tango, who the boys raised.

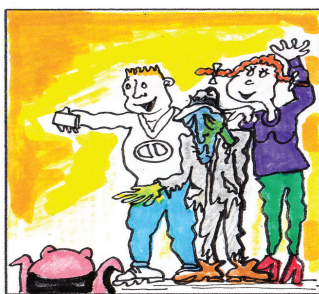
Sadly, the story takes a dark turn. Roy and Silo eventually drifted apart, and Silo (that cad!) took up with Scrappy, who, despite her name, is not a lesbian.

Proving once again that gay, straight, trans, or penguin: no one person/penguin can be expected to speak for all of us. We all have a story, but it's ours to tell.

However, most stories do end with some slut named Scrappy sweeping in and stealing your lover. ■

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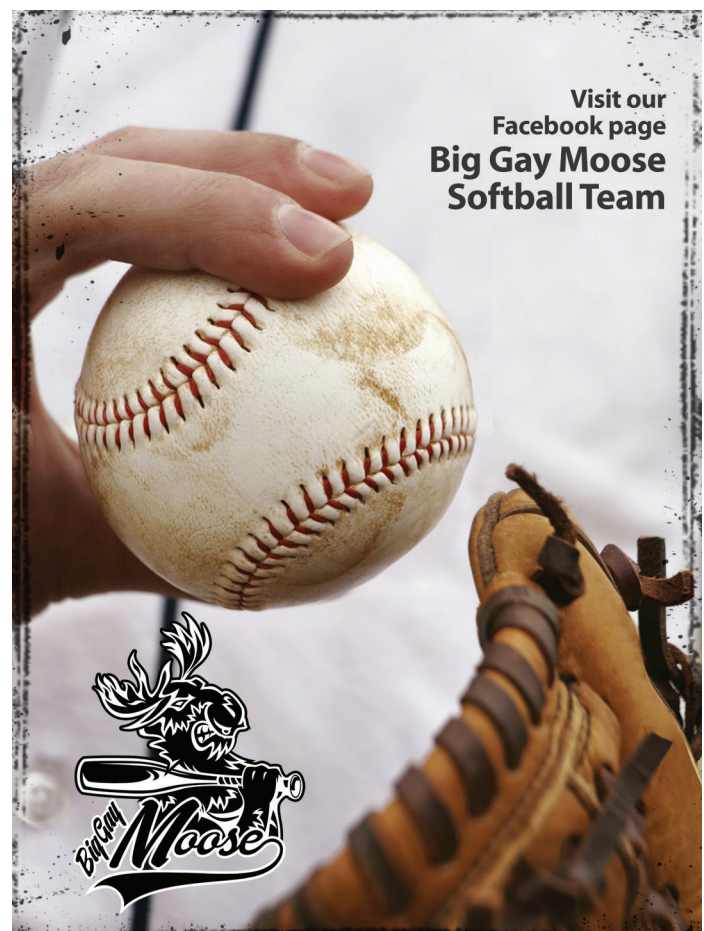
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Bible Drag & The Power of Play

Shortly after my birth in Indianapolis, I was supposed to move to Venezuela. My loving mother and father had all of our bags packed. An extremely conservative Christian organization was sending them to the mission field and their directive for me was full-time boarding school. On a whim, on an intuition, a feeling that something wasn't right, my parents chose otherwise. We got in our car, airport-ready, bags packed for the mission field, and headed in the complete opposite direction: to the north, to Minnesota, to liberal thinking and liberal living. Leaving our family, friends, and community behind, we fled one life and began a new one.

My parents put a huge priority on playtime, particularly in the summer. Creating fun new memories as a family helped my parents move forward in establishing a new family system with a new culture. Summers camping, playing badminton, shooting water guns, and riding bikes were epic memories to hold. While my father was a pastor, I would not classify my upbringing as rigid or harsh. My sexuality was something my parents had to see coming. I was different from the start and most apparently in the way I played.

My two favorite things as a child were my illustrated storybook *Bible* and dressing up as a woman. A devout eight-year-old queer, my passions would combine in something I like to call Bible Drag. I would dress up as the Holy Virgin Mary, Queen Jezebel, or the wife of Abraham. Bible Drag for me was a way of life. A Holy Virgin Mary costume, which also doubled as a Princess Leia costume, was created by belting a white choir robe from church. This lovely new silhouette was complemented by taking red Magic Marker to my lips, a ritual which received a bit more push-back from Mom and Dad.

After donning such dress, I would perform monologues for my parents on a stage made of large wooden blocks. It was the art of storytelling, straight from the pages of my illustrated and abbreviated *Bible*. My

parents, who endured many a Bible Drag show, could grapple with the reality of what they were seeing by saying, "Well, he may be dressed as a woman, but at least he's a Christian woman."

It's been fun to see some religious iconography take to the runway on *RuPaul's Drag Race*. For me, Mimi Infurst's Virgin Mary costume was a delicious piece of nostalgia. It's not often that I think back to my days in Bible Drag, but a return to the innocence of days past feels particularly relevant in a world that seems increasingly dark and serious.

This transition from spring to summer is usually a time that feels the most uplifting and refreshing; however, a world full of Donald Trumps, dystopian projections, smartphone-zombied youth, mass animal deaths, Canadian forest fires, and relentless racism, all magnified by an increasingly connected and informed technical world, makes for dangerous feelings of ennui.

Returning to the playful joys of childhood is a nice way to lighten things up; to realize that it's okay to indulge in some old cartoons and some old music. Playtime is important and it's not just for kids. In a recent NPR interview, Dr. Stuart Brown emphasized the importance of play in adults. He said, "Play is something done for its own sake... It's voluntary, it's pleasurable, it offers a sense of engagement, it takes you out of time. And the act itself is more important than the outcome. What you begin to see when there's major play deprivation in an otherwise competent adult is that they're not much fun to be around."

So this summer, throw back to your past. What was your Bible Drag? What realities did you play with before your world was fully constructed? Take stock of those childhood memories that meant the most and make some new ones. As the weather takes a turn for the better, let's take a moment to embrace our youth, our sense of wonderment, and the playful nature that summer in the Land of 10,000 Lakes is really all about. ■

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